Reaching Beyond the Fence Line

Improving Public Involvement to Achieve Sustainability

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Sustain the Mission — Secure the Future

Sustainability = People

"Environmental issues are human issues."

Bjorn Gunnarsson
Johns Hopkins University

The Triple Bottom Line Illustrated

"If [the mayor of a Brazilian town] can't provide them with jobs, housing and food, they will eat the rain forest – whether that's sustainable or not."

From *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*
by Thomas Friedman

Public Perception Affects Army Operations

- *"EPA orders further training restrictions and cleanup at Camp Edwards"*
  - EPA Press Release, April 1997
- *"Makua loss strains Army"*
  - Honolulu Advertiser, Jan 31, 2000
- *"Neighbors Worry, Await Arsenic Tests AU Grads, Workers Are Seeking Answers"*
  - Washington Post, July 2001
- *"Big Island Residents Protest Stryker"*
  – Honolulu Advertiser, Nov. 7, 2003
- *"Federal Officials Set Aside Worries Over Desert Tortoise, Rare Plant"*
  – Los Angeles Times, March 26, 2004

How We Communicate Has Changed

1998 – Most public comment received by Dept. of Agriculture on any one issue– 8,000

1999 – 275,000 comments *almost all via e-mail*

Who Gets Involved Has Changed

Installations must now work with both:

Communities of Place: Neighbors and local stakeholders

Communities of Interest: National and regional organizations and individuals who claim a "stake" in the process

The Balance of Power Has Changed

"When spiders unite they can tie down a lion."

Ethiopian proverb

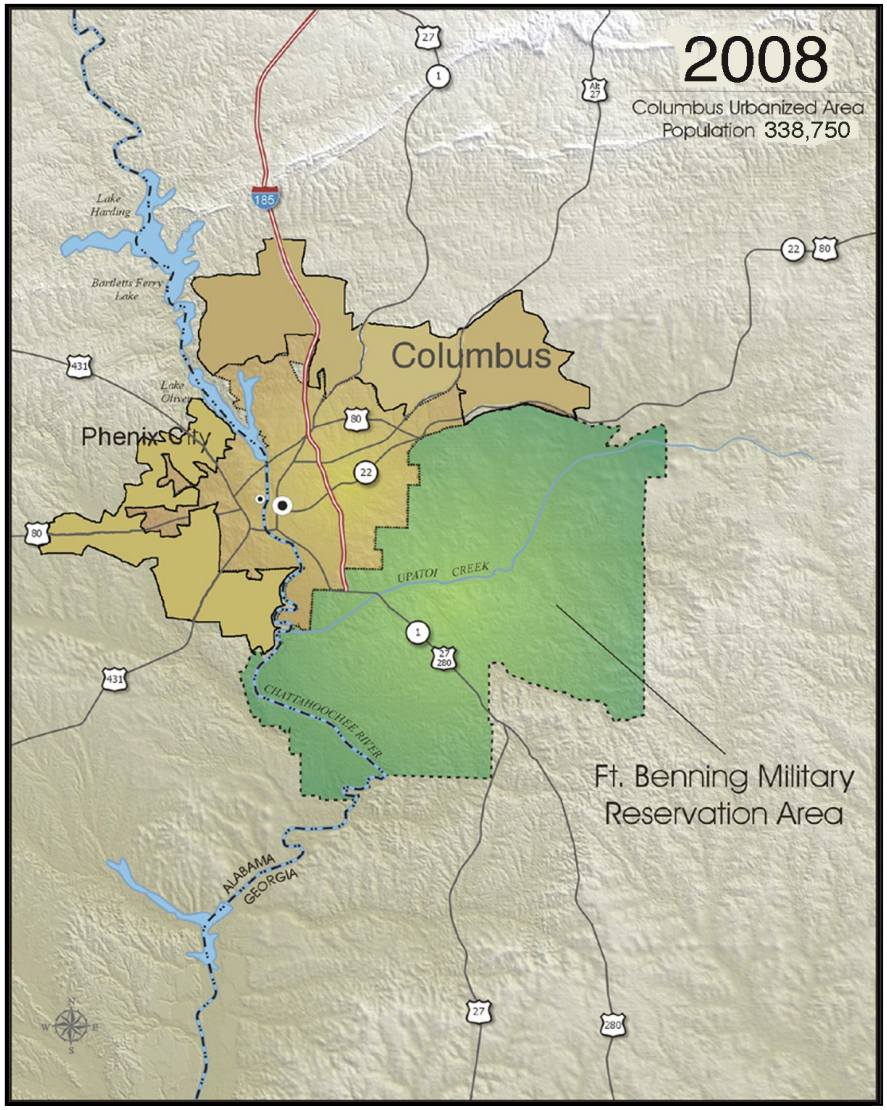
- Organizations are interconnected
- "Super-empowered individuals"
- Local just ain't local any more

The Army Must Change How It Communicates

"Learning organizations operate in the sunshine, sharing their work with a broad network and rapidly processing feedback as it is received. They actively seek views and suggestions from industry and intelligentsia, private citizens and politicians, thereby creating a constructive, two-way communication process."

BG David A. Fastabend
TRADOC Futures Center
Adapt or Die

Why Now?



It's not getting any easier—

- *Urbanization*
- *Environmental legislation*
- *Increased public interest*
- *BRAC 2005*

The BIG Why Now?

Sustainability, the foundation for the Army's new environmental strategy, will increase the need for installations to reach beyond the fence line to exchange information with neighboring communities in order to achieve mutually beneficial goals.

"The sustainable futures of our installations and our communities are inextricably connected."

DRAFT Army Strategy for the Environment 2004

AEPI FY04 Project

- Pull together key action officers supporting Panel 5 and work on completing actions identified by Senior Environmental Leadership Conference Strategic Outreach Panel
- Develop a Public Involvement Campaign Plan that will become a component of the new Army Environmental Strategy

Panel 5 Issues– SELC 2002

ISSUE 1:

The terminology associated with public involvement may be different amongst various organizations, thus causing some confusion as to what is actually required or what the requirement actually means.

ISSUE 2:

There is no single source staff agency/organization responsible for coordinating the conduct of the Army's public involvement program.

ISSUE 3:

Guidance, doctrine, and training are needed to ensure right skill sets are in place.

Overarching issue: As environment is integrated into the Army mission, environmental information/communication should be integrated into the Army communications strategy.

Why AEPI?

- Numerous AEPI-sponsored studies and panels have identified communication as key element of environmental strategy
- AEPI's high level of involvement in the Army's new environmental strategy positions it well to maintain consistencies in public involvement strategy
- AEPI seeks the opportunity to institutionalize the communication process through pilot programs – creating the bridge between policy and implementation

AEPI seeks to pull together the right organizations and help them build the program through the pilot project process – it is not AEPI's intent to "own" the program once established.

Current Participants

- Army Public Affairs Center
- Office of the Chief of Public Affairs
- U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine
- U.S. Army Environmental Center
- U.S. Army Corps of
- National Guard Bureau
- Installation Management Agency
- G3
- Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff, Installation Management , Dept. of Env. Programs

Liaisons with: Army Strategy for the Environment Committee ,
U.S. Army Engineering School, OSD, Defense Information School

Key Projects

- Develop Public Involvement Campaign Plan to complement Army Strategy for the Environment
- Review Army regulations and policy documents to ensure consistencies in definitions and treatment of public involvement
- Develop a comprehensive “how to guide” to public involvement
- Conduct study comparing cost of investing in communication process vs. impact on operations
- Develop a course for environmental and public affairs staff that incorporates all elements of communication (potentially hosted by DINFOS)

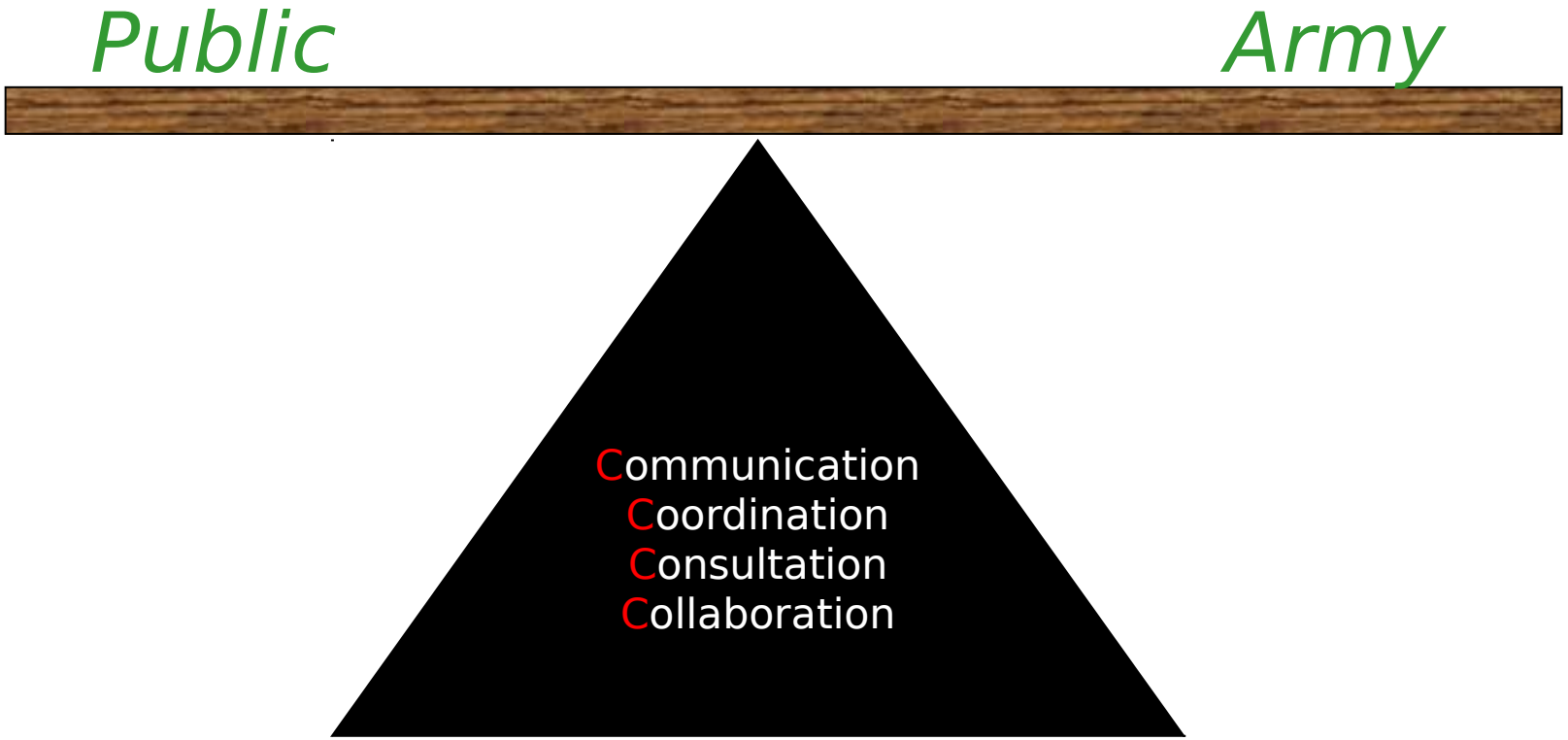
Fundamental Challenges

- Risk communication & traditional public affairs
  - Both types of communication needed
  - Need a “meeting of the minds” in order to speak with one voice
- Numerous laws/regulations require public involvement—little guidance on “who” or “how”
- Public involvement is not unique to the environmental program

Fundamental Challenges (cont.)

- Who becomes the “center of expertise” – the communicators or program manager?
- Public involvement is a contract both ways – the public will expect the Army to act on their input
- How do you conduct open communication in an age of high security?

New Public Involvement Paradigm



Conclusion

- In order to achieve sustainability we must ensure that we take a systematic look at the way we address the issues and concerns of our stakeholders.
- True change will only come from changing how we think about the public – our ultimate customer.
- Future issues will need to be resolved through collaboration with our partners beyond the fence line.

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